

and ultimately the support of all the Members of this House and the Senate.

I look forward to the day where we can pass this bill in both Chambers and put it on the President's desk for the President's signature, and again, truly make a difference for the people that we serve. I think it's the right thing to do.

With that, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for his friendship, his valuable input and support on this bipartisan universal health care bill. And I also want to take a minute just to thank the Speaker for giving us time to discuss this very important issue.

Mr. SHAYS. If I could thank the Speaker as well. And thank you again and your staff, and my staff as well. It's a great opportunity to work on this legislation with you. Thank you.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you. I thank my staff as well. It is something that often gets overlooked, and I want to make sure that it's not because your staff and my staff have worked so closely on this, as well as the effort that you and I have put in. A lot of great work has come from this collaborative effort. And I thank you again for your support and your input.

TAXPAYER FREEDOM DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity tonight to be on this floor to speak on an issue that is near and dear to a lot of our hearts, and certainly a lot of our constituents' hearts, because tomorrow, April 23, is Taxpayer Freedom Day. It's an opportunity, for the first time this year, for taxpayers to start working for themselves and not simply for their government to pay taxes.

On April 15 we paid our taxes. On April 23, days beyond that, we come to a point where it is no longer an issue of working to pay just the taxes that each taxpayer needs to pay, but now we go on to do for ourselves what we can and should do that would allow us to do things for others that we would like to do as well, to benefit them, to meet needs that cannot simply be met by government, that can be met in special ways by ourselves.

This morning I had the privilege of being at a Big Brothers, Big Sisters breakfast fundraiser and hearing an outstanding speaker who was from business and industry, a leader in her own right with a major corporation in my district, and yet appealing to the fact that in the private sector, in charities and special functions, that there is a place for finding ways to do it better, quicker, faster, more efficiently and cheaper in the process, that there needs to be ways to collaborate in such a way that organizations that sometimes are redundant and overlap come

together, if not to join forces as the same group, but to join forces in providing resources to each other that they don't have to duplicate. I said to the speaker afterwards, you know, that's, indeed, what government ought to be doing as well.

The only way we will do that, though, is by forcing ourselves to do things appropriately to allow the engine of our economy, that being the private sector, individual worker, entrepreneur, risk taker, business person, industry, to do for themselves only what they can do. And to do that, they certainly need to have the resources in place that will enable them to function successfully.

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By having to work until April 23 just to pay taxes, that's not the right approach to accomplish that.

I recently was hooked on the HBO mini-series "John Adams," a mini-series on the take-off on the book written by David McCullough, a noted historian on the Framers of our way of life here in the United States, our governmental system, the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and all that makes this country great. And I was again impressed by the character of the Framers of our system of government who saw freedom and liberty as the ultimate priority and saw that freedom and liberty ultimately flowing from individual property rights, individual rights to use resources that they had, and the opportunity ultimately in the Revolution to break away from the King and be able to control more of one's own largesse, limited or great as it might be.

I was impressed by the character of these gentlemen and those behind them, the men and women who supported them. I was impressed with the fact that they believed in people, in individuals, in their ability to make good decisions, their ability to choose well, their ability to spend their resources more wisely, more efficiently, and better, certainly, than a larger body known as the government.

They were also appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that these individuals, in greatness of their own hearts, could reach out and meet the medical needs, meet the security needs, meet the housing and care needs of individuals, and go beyond just themselves because they had ability to do that, if their government allowed them the liberty and freedom of choice because they had resources to do that as well.

I believe that our Framers never even would have envisioned what we've come to today. They would have never envisioned that we, as individual taxpayers, would work until April 23, after paying taxes on April 15, just to pay the taxes that we paid on April 15. That is what they revolted for, that lack of liberty and choice in using their own resources.

Someone far more significant than I once said, "The ability to tax is the

ability to destroy." I can't talk about other States, and I'm delighted to have another Member with me on the floor tonight to discuss this issue as well, my friend and colleague and the freshman class president, of which I'm part, BILL SALI from Idaho. I can't talk, Congressman, about your State, but I can talk about Michigan, a great State, a great State of natural resources, surrounded on three sides by the Great Lakes if we count our upper peninsula, and I would not forget the Upers, surrounded on three and a half sides by the Great Lakes, with natural resources in the ground, growing on top of the ground, and with natural resources known as human resources that would be second to none. A State that has a history of producing things, of manufacturing, leading in manufacturing, developing the auto industry. The district of which I represent, right in the heart of it was where Henry Ford developed the whole process that has become the assembly line approach to the auto industry.

And yet this great State at this point in time sits at, sadly, the number one worst unemployment rate in the Nation. According to CEO Magazine last week, we rank the 49th worst business climate in the United States. We have people moving out of the State to find jobs. We have our friends in Indiana recruiting jobs from Michigan and doing it far more easily because of what we have done in our State. A State that truly is being destroyed by the ability to tax.

Most recently, the State legislature and our Governor went the wrong direction and frustrated any type of turnaround by increasing income tax, by putting a tax on services for the first time, and then putting a new business tax in place. And then having the cry come up from the taxpayer about the service tax, they rescinded that and put a surcharge on top of the business tax. And then we have the chutzpah in ads and otherwise that say that we are open for business.

I love my State. I love the people of my State. And I think we are Wolverines because we're tenacious, as de Tocqueville said. But we are frustrating the engine of the economy by the excessive taxation that we have put on.

I want to talk more about it, but I know Congressman SALI has much to say on this as well because, Congressman, you are known, first and foremost, as a man of principle, but a friend of the taxpayer, a man who came to Congress because of that agenda to provide less frustration and more opportunity for taxpayers. And I know that tomorrow you will rejoice that we have reached Taxpayer Freedom Day. But I know as well, my friend, that you wish it was far sooner than April 23.

I yield to my friend from Idaho.

Mr. SALI. I would like to thank the good gentleman for yielding to share a few thoughts.